

## **MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS**

I am pleased to present the first unified Strategic Plan for the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR). Nearly a year in the making, this plan integrates and aligns the five program areas within ASCR under one strategic mission goal, placing a strong emphasis on performance measurement and results.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) seven mission areas have varied responsibilities and management challenges. The approximately 100,000 individuals who comprise USDA's permanent, temporary, seasonal, and intermittent workforce are critical for USDA to achieve its mission, programs, and strategic goals. Through this Strategic Plan, ASCR will provide civil rights leadership and services for all mission areas, agencies and offices within USDA in a manner that blends and balances the individual differences of the people who comprise this Department, in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, intolerance and reprisal. Whether it is our protection of America's animal and plant resources, the improvement of health through a safe food supply, or the stewardship of our Nation's national forests and rangelands, America demands and deserves the best from USDA. ASCR plays an important role in helping USDA achieve its varied mission objectives by promoting practices that allow all workers and citizens to achieve their highest potential.

The ASCR Strategic Plan brings together the mission responsibilities of ASCR's five program offices in an integrated manner. The plan consists of one strategic enterprise goal and program specific supporting objectives so that every employee can see how the jobs they do contribute to fulfilling our overall mission. Performance targets and outcomes provide the gauge by which we measure our success in achieving results year by year. These efforts require a management focus that provides value to those who receive our services, maintains accountability, and integrates our activities to avoid duplication and overlap.

We relied on input from a variety of internal and external customers to produce this plan and establish our unified strategic direction. The ultimate responsibility for its execution, however, remains with us. We look forward to carrying out our responsibilities for the benefit of USDA through our Strategic Plan.

**Vernon B. Parker**  
**Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights**